



# HOUSE DEMOCRATIC OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 12, 2009

CONTACT: Mark Hollis  
(850) 488-9622

## ‘Core Mission’ for Schools? Let’s adequately fund education

Florida House Democratic Caucus members led a passionate debate Thursday with Republicans on the House PreK-12 Appropriations Committee about the “core mission” of Florida’s schools.

House Democrats stood firm and reiterated that adequately funding public schools and achieving a vibrant economy are among their top missions.

Unfortunately, some Republicans may not realize that Florida’s schools are struggling. Representative Anitere Flores, the Republican chair of the committee, said she “will not accept that we are underfunding education.”

But pesky facts show that Florida can do better for Florida students, teachers and families.

- Lawmakers cut \$140 per student from the 2008-09 state budget during a special session in January. As a result, per-student funding dropped to \$6,860. (*Source: the Florida Education Finance Program.*)
- Florida ranks 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation in education spending compared to personal wealth. (*U.S. Census*)
- For every \$1,000 of personal income, Florida spends less than \$34 on education. The national average is \$43. Our neighbor, Georgia, spends \$48. (*Source: The U.S. Census Bureau.*)
- The state’s share of education funding is roughly 48 percent for K-12 schools. (For the first time since the creation of the state’s school funding formula in 1973, the state’s share is less than 50 percent.) Meanwhile, Republicans have shifted more of the burden of funding education on the backs of local taxpayers.

“Florida school districts are facing financial peril,” said **Representative Martin Kiar, the Democratic Ranking member of Pre-K-12 Policy Committee**. “It would be foolish to pursue deeper cuts. The core mission of the Legislature ought to be to adequately fund public education.”

###